



Revitalizing Nutrition Education in the Connecticut WIC Program: Project ReNEW

**FNS National Nutrition Education Conference 2
September 14, 2005**






Introduction and Background





Need for Project

- Qualitative assessment findings
 - Changes in health and social services environment
 - Community health and nutrition issues
 - High “child attrition rate”
- 



Qualitative assessment results: Local WIC staff

Things staff like most about WIC:

- Seeing positive results
- Helping others in need
- Variety and fast pace of work





Qualitative assessment results: Local WIC staff

What WIC staff like least:

- Certification process
- Dealing with difficult clients
- Too little time with clients





Qualitative assessment results: Local WIC staff

Recommendations for improvement:

- More and better training
- Train all staff on basic nutrition issues
- Improved communications and language issues





Qualitative assessment results: Participants

Things they most appreciated:

- Money saved
- Information and education services
- Friendly respectful staff





Qualitative assessment results: Participants


Things clients want changed at WIC:

- Specific food selections and amounts
- Attitude problems with stores and staff
- Limited hours of operation






Changes in Health and Social Services Environment

- Medicaid Managed Care
 - Welfare reform
 - Increasing diversity of population
- 



Community Health and Nutrition Issues

- Unresponsive iron deficiency among non-anemic children in Hartford
 - Increasing number of children who are overweight or at risk for overweight
 - Low breastfeeding duration rates
- 




High “child attrition rate”

Only 50% of the Connecticut
WIC birth cohort participates
in the program after age 1






Project Goals

- To improve WIC staff nutrition competencies
 - To improve the quality of interaction between WIC staff, WIC participants and the community
 - To sustain the enhanced quality of nutrition services provided by the CT WIC Program
- 




Overview

- Staff education: core and elective
 - Update and standardize nutrition education materials
 - Expand local agency performance and nutrition care guidelines
 - Produce customer service curriculum in interactive CD-ROM format
 - Evaluation
- 



Key Project Partners

- Local WIC Programs
 - UConn School of Medicine: CT Area Health Education Center (AHEC) Program
 - UConn Department of Nutritional Sciences: Family Nutrition and EFNEP Programs
 - Hispanic Health Council, Inc.
 - CT Food Stamp Nutrition Education
 - CT Team Nutrition – UConn and State Department of Education
- 



Project Consultants

- Project Coordinator: **Rosa Mo, EdD, RD, CD/N**
 - Cultural Competence: **Grace Damio, MS, CD/N**
Hispanic Health Council, Inc.
 - Evaluation: **Jeffrey Backstrand, PhD (UMDNJ)**
and **Sarah McGraw, PhD**
 - Customer Service and CD-ROM: **Learning Dynamics**
 - Experiential Learning: **Ann Ferris, PhD, RD; Michelle Pierce, PhD, RD, and Meredith Poehlitz, MS, RD,**
(UConn Department of Nutritional Sciences)
 - Counseling Skills: **Jean Anliker, PhD, RD, LDN (UMass)**
 - Breastfeeding: **Grace Damio and Aleja Rosario, IBCLC**
 - Advanced BF: **Suzanne Campbell, PhD, APRN, IBCLC**
 - Educational Materials: **Linda Drake, MS (UConn-DNS)**
and **Vertex Marketing**
 - The Feeding Relationship: **Pamela Estes, MS, RD, CD**
(Ellyn Satter Associates)
- 




Staff Development Sessions

CORE

- Customer Service
- Cultural Competence
- Breastfeeding

ELECTIVE

- Bright Futures Conf.
 - Preschool Nutrition Conference
 - Counseling
 - Experiential Learning
 - Team Building
 - Bringing out the Best in Others
 - Leadership Development
 - The Feeding Relationship
- 



Staff Development Sessions

- Modules include leader's guides and participant workbooks
- Case scenarios were developed with input from local staff
- Exercises were designed to build skills





Core Curriculum

Customer Service

- Challenging situations are common and require sophisticated customer service skills:
 - Effective communication
 - Conflict resolution
- Team building







Core Curriculum

Cultural Competence

- Globalization will continue to increase the diversity of WIC participants
- Local agencies need to continue to adopt programming approaches that are:
 - Culturally sensitive and relevant
 - Client-centered









Core Curriculum

Breastfeeding

- CDC: Breastfeeding is one of 4 key cornerstones to prevention of chronic disease
- WIC staff must be knowledgeable, comfortable and equipped to promote and support BF





Elective Curriculum

- **Bright Futures Conference**
 - **Preschool Nutrition Conference**
 - **Counseling Skills Workshops**
 - **Experiential Learning**
 - **Team Building**
 - **Bringing out the Best in Others**
 - **Leadership Development Center**
 - **The Feeding Relationship**
- 



Learning Goals

● Facilitated Group Discussion

- to become more familiar with the process of running a facilitated discussion group

● Celebrating Cultures

- to appreciate the nuances of ethnically diverse foodways

● Internet Use


- to find and critically evaluate nutrition information and education materials on the internet







Other Project Components

- Update and standardize nutrition education materials
 - Expand local agency performance and nutrition care guidelines
 - Produce core curriculum in interactive CD-ROM format
 - Evaluation
- 



*Feeding
Your Baby*

Birth to 4 Months


Daily Infant Feeding Guide

	Birth to 2 months	2 to 4 months
Breast milk	On demand, usually every 2 to 3 hours	On demand, usually every 2 to 4 hours
Iron-fortified infant formula	On demand, usually 2 to 4 ounces every 2 to 3 hours Most babies drink 18 to 32 ounces in 24 hours	On demand, usually 4 to 6 ounces every 3 to 4 hours Most babies drink 24 to 40 ounces in 24 hours






Rationale for the development of CD-ROM

- Need to sustain the effort
 - Current staff needs to review the skills learned during the educational sessions
 - Recently hired staff need customer service skills
 - Repeated stand-up training is cost-prohibitive – in time & money
 - Cost-effective solution
- 



Rationale for the development of CD-ROM

- CD-ROM helps meet the different adult learning styles.
 - Actively engages the learner
 - Self-paced and self directed
 - Problem centered - solving of realistic scenarios developed by local staff
 - Learning by experience
 - Application to practical situations
- 

WIC CD Program Architecture

